DNA

STORY AND ART BY RACHEL UHLDRIKS

SEQUENCE: ZERO

SEGMENT: MUD

ARE YOU EXCITED?

NO.

... ARE YOU SCARED?

YEAH.

DON'T BE.

BUT WHAT IF HE DOESN'T LIKE ME?

SIRIUS WILL *ADORE* YOU, I PROMISE.

HE'S *VERY EXCITED* TO MEET HIS NEW LITTLE BROTHER.

HOW MANY OTHER KIDS ARE THERE?

TEN.

THAT'S A LOT.

HOW MANY IS TEN?

COUNT YOUR FINGERS.

ARE YOU AFRAID OF MEETING THEM, TOO?

YEAH.

... WHAT DID I DO WHEN YOU FIRST MET ME?

DON'T TELL ME YOU FORGOT.

IT'S ONLY BEEN A WEEK.

WHEN I SAID I LIKED DRAWLING, YOU GAVE ME A *PEN* AND *STICKY NOTES*.

RIGHT!

THESE NEW PEOPLE YOU'RE MEETING ARE GOING TO BE *JUST* AS NICE.

AND IF THEY'RE NOT...

YOU'RE PERFECTLY ALLOWED TO STAND UP FOR YOURSELF, ALRIGHT?

BEN!

WHY ARE YOU SO LATE!?

IS MILO ALREADY HERE?

WHAT?

I'M NOT!

CHECK YOUR WATCH.

08:01 PM
05 JUN 2023

OH, NO. I KEPT YOU WAITING A WHOLE *EXTRA MINUTE*. HOW AWFUL.

YEAH, WELL A MINUTE'S A LONG TIME.

HI!

I'M YOUR BIG BROTHER!

MY NAME IS SIRIUS; YOU'RE LUKAS, RIGHT?

Y-YEAH.

SO, UH...

... CAN WE GO PLAY, OR WHAT?

UM...

Gus Shumaker

99% 8:02p

06/06/23 7:48pm

Rigel's bloodwork came back, results indicate malnutrition. Threw everything else off. Are you making sure he eats?

Since when do I need to do that?

Since October when he started pawning off his meals. Did Jay not tell you?

I guess not? I got in his face for the tooth thing when I came back in January, he's barely said a word to me since.

...? The heck did you say?

Things I knew would hurt that I felt he needed to hear. Just want him to get help

Idk how you can work under that.

I'm extremely used to it lol Anyway, I can't believe I didn't notice that on my own, I'm sorry man. I'm picking Lukas up right now, I'll be down there after intro.

06/06/23 8:02pm

Emmett's pissed about the bad bloodwork, intro can wait, please come here now.

...YES.

IN FACT, I'M PUTTING YOU IN CHARGE.

GUS NEEDS ME IN THE MED WARD, APPARENTLY, SO WHEN THE OTHERS START WAKING UP, I WANT YOU TO TAKE LUKAS TO MEET THEM.

THINK YOU CAN DO THAT?

I'M A BIG KID. I CAN DO *ANYTHING.*

HEH, GOOD. I'M TRUSTING YOU.

IF I'M NOT BACK SOON, JAY WILL BE FILLING IN.

IS THAT OKAY?

YEAH, OF COURSE!

ALRIGHT, IF YOU'RE SURE.

I'LL TRY TO BE QUICK.

SSSOOOO...

WHAT D'YOU LIKE TO DO?

D-DRAW.

WHAT'S THAT?

I-IT'S WHEN YOU MAKE PICTURES.

OHH..

YOU MEANT DRAW.

SHOW ME!?

I-I DON'T HAVE MY PEN!

OH, THAT'S FINE. YOU DON'T NEED IT!

HERE...

... DRAW WITH THIS!

... EW.

YEAH, THAT'S WHY IT'S AGAINST THE RULES TO BE IN THE MUD.

BUT, IT'S FUN, SO IT'S FINE.

... WHAT?

STAY THERE, I'LL BE RIGHT BACK!

WHAT!?

I WANT YOU TO MEET MY FRIEND ORION.

BUT HE'S EITHER STILL ASLEEP OR HE'S BEING SHY, OR SOMETHING.

SO I GOTTA GO GET HIM.

OH. OKAY.

DRAW SOME STUFF WHILE I'M GONE, ALRIGHT?

I WILL.

HEY.

BLUE.

YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE IN THE MUD.

SIRIUS TOLD ME IT WAS OKAY.

SIRIUS IS STUPID, AND ONLY OTHER STUPID KIDS LISTEN TO HIM.

.. UM.

ALRIGHT.

YOU'RE THAT NEW KID WHO'S SUPPOSED TO BE HERE TODAY, AREN'T YOU?

YEAH, MY NAME S LUKAS.

I'M RIGEL.

JUST SO YOU KNOW THE NEW KID *BEFORE* YOU LISTENS TO SIRIUS TOO, AND NOBODY LIKES HIM.

SO IF YOU *ALSO* LISTEN TO SIRIUS, NOBODY'S GONNA LIKE YOU, EITHER

SIRIUS IS MY BIG BROTHER, THOUGH.

SO?

I HAVE AN OLDER BROTHER TOO, AND I DON'T LISTEN TO HIM.

YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE IN THE MUD, AND IF SIRIUS TOLD YOU IT WAS OKAY, THEN HE'S *STUPID*. AND SO ARE *YOU* FOR LISTENING.

I'M JUST TRYING TO HELP YOU FIT IN

YOU CAN EITHER LISTEN TO ME OR--

I'M NOT STUPID AND NEITHER IS SIRIUS.

GO AWAY.

WHAT IS THIS CRAP YOU DREW ON THE WALL ANYWAY?

I-- IT'S NOT--

IT'S A DRAWLING OF--

WAIT. WHAT'RE YOU--

SPOOK

W-WHY...?

I WAS GONNA GET WRECKED ANYWAY. YOU DREW IT ON A WALL OUTSIDE.

WHERE IT RAINS.

YOU'RE *REALLY* STUPID.

WHAT IS *WRONG* WITH YOU!?

I TOLD HIM TO GET OUT OF THE MUD, AND HE DIDN'T LISTEN.

SO YOU MADE HIM CRY!?

JUST SHUT UP AND HIT ME SO I CAN GET YOU IN TROUBLE FOR FIGHTING AGAIN.

WAIT—

I'M NOT STUPID.

MY DRAWLINGS AREN'T CRAP.

AND I HATE YOU.

ARE YOU *SERIOUSLY* GETTIN' YOUR BUTT KICKED BY THE NEW THREE YEAR OLD?

N-NO, GO AWAY!

WH...

HEY, *NO!* GET OUT OF THE MUD, *NOW!*

THE NEW KID PUSHED ME!

I'M SURE HE DID, RIGEL.

WHAT DID YOU DO TO HIM?

NOTHING!

YEAH, NO, SORRY. NOT BUYING IT

IT'S TRUE!

YOU'RE SPENDING THE NEXT HOUR IN YOUR ROOM. ALONE.

WHAT, WHY!?

IF YOU'RE GOING TO BE A *LIAR*, AT LEAST BE GOOD AT IT.

IF *YOU* KNOW I DON'T BEHAVE, THEN *YOU* SHOULDN'T HAVE LEFT US ALONE!

THIS IS *YOUR* FAULT, NOT MINE!

ALTERNATIVELY...

... YOU'RE OLD ENOUGH TO KNOW BETTER

BY THE WAY, IT'S TWO HOURS NOW.

YOU WANNA KEEP PUSHING ME?

NO!

SIRIUS

LUKAS.

GO GET CLEANED UP.

LEON, MAKE SURE THEY DO IT.

YOU JUST BEAT UP A SIX YEAR OLD. YOU'RE AMAZING.

HEY, UH...

...I'M RIGEL'S OLDER BROTHER

I'M SORRY HE S... LIKE *THAT.*

IT AIN'T *YOUR* FAULT CYG. DON'T WORRY.

QUIT STALL NG THEM.

HURRY UP AND GET CLEAN SO WE CAN PLAY!

WE WILL!

THAT WAS CYGNUS AND NAOS.

THEY'RE BOTH NICE.

OH!

I STILL WANT YOU TO MEET MY FRIEND, HE'S--

... MMM.

UM, HANG ON A SEC.

HEY...

RIGEL'S GONE NOW, ALRIGHT?

HE'S NOT COMING BACK FOR A WHILE.

ORION?

IS HE OKAY?

HE WILL BE IN A MINUTE.

THIS IS ORION.

RIGEL SCARES HIM PRETTY BAD, SO HE'S GONNA BE QUIET FOR A WHILE UNTIL HE FEELS BETTER.

HE'S SORRY.

WE'RE GONNA GO BACK OVER BY THE MUD, OKAY?

YOU SHOULD COME TOO WHEN YOU'RE READY.

SO YOU DREW THIS, RIGHT?

YEAH, BUT THAT FAT KID RUINED IT.

HM.

Splish

WHAT'RE YOU DOING?

YOU'LL SEE.

OKAY, SO...

A VOLCANO ERUPTED, AND THOSE GUYS OVER THERE GOT AWAY...

... BUT THESE GUYS'RE ON FIRE.

LET'S... GET CLEANED UP BEFORE WE GET LEON IN TROUBLE, HEH.

THANK YOU.

YOU'RE GONNA FIT IN PERFECT, LUKE.